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Book Notices.

"Goethe's Essays on Art." Translated by Samuel Gray Ward. Boston: JAMES MONROE & Co.

WE shall have something to say on the subject of Goethe's views of Art in the department of Reviews, and shall recur to this book again. It contains essays on various subjects related to Art: some of them too abstruse for our enjoyment, if not for our comprehension. Goethe based his ideas of Art too much on Greek tradition to be of any great use to himself or his time. Indisputably possessed of a mind capable of solving its most difficult problems, if it had been permitted to act freely, he still contributed really very little to the renewal of Art. An extract from the essay on "Imitation, Manner, Style," was given in our first number, and this whole essay is valuable. We give the opening of "Introduction to the Propylæum."

"The youth, when he begins to feel the attraction of Nature and Art, believes that by an earnest effort he shall soon be able to pierce to the inmost sanctuary; the man finds, that after long wandering up and down, that he is still upon the threshold.

"This consideration has been the occasion of our title; the step, the door, the entrance, the ante-chamber, the space between the inner and the outer, the sacred and the profane, is the place we choose as a common ground of intercourse with our friends.

"Neither will it be foreign to our object, if by this word Propylæum, the reader is reminded of that edifice that led to the Citadel of Athens and the Temple of Minerva; only let no one attribute to us the presumption of attempting here a like work of Art and magnificence."

An avowal, so decided, of the leaning to the Greek Art, will explain many of the errors of Goethe, or, at least, that which we believe to be erroneous.

The book is a most readable addition, which all Art libraries ought to receive.

"*Hypatia; or, New Foes with an Old Face.*" By Charles Kingsley. Reprint of Crosby, Nichols & Co., Boston: 1855.

"HYPATIA" is a most fascinating book. It mingles in a powerful manner the romance of life with philosophy, religion, and beautiful impressions of the external world. The scene of the story is laid in Alexandria, during the fifth century, but unlike most works of its kind, does not lose the truth of human nature in an attempt to represent it in different times, and under different aspects from those in which the writer sees it.

The title, *New Foes with an Old Face*, proclaims what is found subtly hid in the book, that the author, in drawing a picture of ancient times, has had in his mind modern parallels. He evidently believed that the influences which controlled men then, would produce the same effects now if uncontrolled—a believer in the true vitality of Christianity, he sees the ever-acting enemies to it, which were the same in the old time as now, and while he traces out the course of the Alexandrian church, he draws a lesson for all churches of modern time. We give an extract from the preface:—

"Against this vast organization the Church had been fighting for now four hundred years, armed only with its own might and all-embracing message, and with the manifestation of a spirit of purity and virtue of love and self-sacrifice, which had proved itself mightier to melt and weld together the hearts of men, than all the force and terror, all the mechanical organization, all the sensual baits, with which the empire had been contending against that gospel, in which it had recognized, instinctively and at first sight, its interecline foe.

"And now the Church had conquered. The weak

things of this world had confounded the strong. In spite of the devilish cruelties of persecutors; in spite of the contaminating atmosphere of sin which surrounded her; in spite of having to form herself not out of a race of pure and separate creatures, but by a most literal 'new birth,' out of those very fallen masses who insulted and persecuted her; in spite of having to endure within herself continual outbursts of the evil passions in which her members had once indulged without check; in spite of a thousand counterfeits, which sprung up around her and within her, claiming to be parts of her, and alluring men to themselves by that very exclusiveness and party arrogance which disproved their claim; in spite of all, she had conquered."

The book contains some magnificent word-pictures, one only of which we give:—

"As he spoke, a long, arrow of level light flashed down the gorge, from crag to crag, awakening every crack and slab to vividness and life. The great crimson sun rose swiftly through the dim night mist of the desert, and as he poured his glory down the glen, the haze rose in threads and plumes, and vanished, leaving the stream to sparkle round the rocks, like the living, twinkling eye of the whole scene. Swallows flashed by hundreds out of the cliffs, and began their air-dance for the day; the jerboa hopped stealthily homeward on his stilts from his broken meadow in the monastery garden; the brown sand-lizards underneath the stones opened one eyelid each, and having satisfied themselves that it was day, dragged their bloated bodies and whip-like tails out into the most burning patch of gravel which they would find, and, nestling together as a further protection against cold, fell fast asleep again; the buzzard, who considered himself lord of the valley, awoke with a long querulous bark, and rising aloft in two or three vast rings, to stretch himself after his night's sleep, hung motionless watching every lark which chirruped on the cliffs; while from the far-off Nile below, the awakening croak of pelicans, the clang of geese, the whistle of the godwit and curlew, came ringing up the winding of the glen, and last of all the voices of the monks rose chanting a morning hymn to some wild eastern air; and a new day had begun in Scitis, like those which went before, and those which were to follow after, week after week, year after year, of toil, and prayer as quiet as its sleep."

The book is got up in excellent style.

"*Notes on Duels and Duelling.*" By Lorenzo Sabine. Crosby, Nichols & Co.: Boston, 1855.

"NOTES ON DUELS" is a laborious collation of facts and documents with regard to the duello, being in fact little else than an index of the duels fought, with the letters, &c., interchanged. The correspondence between Banon and Decatur, and Burr and Hamilton, will be found valuable; and, as a matter of curiosity, the whole book, indeed; but we believe that the desire expressed that the book may be of use in checking the resort to single combat, will be found idle, since those who now resort to it are of the class whom books will hardly reach.

"*Fanny Gray.*" Crosby Nichols & Co., Boston.

Nor a book, good reader, but a very pleasant variety of character and costume, in the shape of several paper figures, so arranged that one head and face upon each body produces many agreeable changes. It is amusement for children who love the Fine Arts, as all children do—the figures are prettily colored, and neatly put up in a fancy box.

"*Home Life.* Twelve Lectures, by Wm. Hague, D. D. JAMES S. DICKERSON: New York, 1855.

THESE lectures are written in a serious, dignified tone, and embrace the duties of the family and those of the relation of employer and employed. The lecture on "the marriage institution" is an earnest, kindly discourse, the read-

ing which the world at large stands much in need of, but which we fear will be little heeded. Men do not read grave lectures like these, until they have learned to love the truths they convey, and then, perhaps, they need them not

THE fact is, we none of us enough appreciate the nobleness and sacredness of color. Nothing is more common than to hear it spoken of as a subordinate beauty—nay, even as a mere source of a sensual pleasure; and we might almost believe that we were daily among men who

"Could strip, for aught the prospect yields
To them, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
With which the sun his setting shrouds."

But it is not so. Such expressions are used for the most part in thoughtlessness; and if the speakers would only take the pains to imagine what the world and their own existence would become, if the blue were taken from the sky, and the gold from the sunshine, and the verdure from the leaves, and the crimson from the blood which is the life of man, the flush from the cheek, the darkness from the eye, the radiance from the hair—if they could but see, for an instant, white human creatures living in a white world—they would soon feel what they owe to color. The fact is, that of all God's gifts to the sight of man, color is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn. We speak rashly of gay color, and sad color, for color cannot at once be good and gay. All good color is in some degree pensive; the loveliest is melancholy; and the purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love color the most.

I know that this will sound strange in many ears, and will be especially startling to those who have considered the subject chiefly with reference to painting; for the great Venetian schools of color are not usually understood to be either pure or pensive, and the idea of its preëminence is associated in nearly every mind with the coarseness of Rubens, and the sensualities of Correggio and Titian. But a more comprehensive view of Art will soon correct this impression. It will be discovered, in the first place, that the more faithful and earnest the religion of the painter, the more pure and prevalent is the system of his color. It will be found, in the second place, that where color becomes a primal intention with a painter, otherwise mean or sensual, it instantly elevates him, and becomes the one sacred and saving element in his work. The very depth of the stoop to which the Venetian painters and Rubens sometimes condescend, is a consequence of feeling confidence in the power of their color to keep them from falling. They hold on by it, as by a chain let down from heaven, with one hand, though they may sometimes seem to gather dust and ashes with the other. And, in the last place, it will be found that so surely as a painter is irreligious, thoughtless, or obscene in disposition, so surely is his coloring cold, gloomy, and valueless. The opposite poles of Art in this respect are Frà Angelico and Salvator Rosa; of whom the one was a man who smiled seldom, wept often, prayed constantly, and never harbored an impure thought. His pictures are simply so many pieces of jewelry, the colors of the draperies being perfectly pure, as various as those of a painted-window, chastened only by paleness, and relieved upon a gold ground. Salvator was a dissipated jester and satirist, a man who spent his life in masquing and revelry. But his pictures are full of horror, and their color is for the most part gloomy grey. Truly it would seem as if Art had so much of eternity in it, that it must take its dye from the close rather than the course of life:—"In such laughter the heart of man is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness."—*Stones of Venice*, vol. 2, p. 144.